

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

7. (original) A method for filling a natural hollow elongated casing with a meat emulsion, comprising, providing a casing filling station including a stuffing tube for supporting the casing to be filled with meat emulsion, providing a casing hopper adjacent the casing filling station to serve as a reservoir for a plurality of shirred artificial casings for delivery of shirred artificial casings for mounting on the stuffing tube, and moving the casing hopper away from its position adjacent the casing filling station when natural casings are placed on a stuffing tube in the casing filling station.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7 wherein a PLC is provided and senses when the casing hopper is in its position adjacent the casing filling station to thereupon control the longitudinal movement of the stuffing tube, to maintain the stuffing tube in a non- automatic extension mode, to hold a follower connected to the stuffing tube in a retracted position, and to maintain the casing hopper in its position adjacent the casing filling station.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 wherein a natural casing is placed on the stuffing tube with the stuffing tube being in a partially retracted position to

locate a discharge end of the stuffing tube upstream of the casing filling station; actuating the PLC to cause the stuffing tube to extend through a chuck, and to cause a meat pump to start pumping meat through the stuffing tube when the position of the stuffing tube through the chuck is sensed, and to start ~~the~~ rotation of the chuck and the stuffing tube, and to start ~~the~~ an operation of linking chains and a conveyor located downstream from the casing filling station; manually advancing the follower and sensing its arrival at a position adjacent a twister mechanism containing the chuck, and causing the PLC to stop ~~the~~ operation of the casing filling station.